

# PARKS AND RECREATION



January  
2023

## 2022 Annual Report: People Power

The purpose of this document is to present a snapshot of progress for the 2022 fiscal year (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022) and to lay out goals for the current 2023 fiscal year.

# Parks and Recreation

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT: PEOPLE POWER

### DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The theme for the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Annual Report is “People Power,” which is a story thoroughly conveyed within this report. The people of Parks and Recreation, the myriad community volunteers, and supporters of the department’s mission came together in 2022 in a way that made the impossible possible. Public spaces and experiences were enhanced leading to improved health and wellness in our city. Diversity, equity, and inclusion were at the forefront of the department’s work, and importantly, in partnership with many community leaders and stakeholders. The investment and attention to improving the conditions of the natural environment remained a top priority.

2022 might also be considered the year of the lemonade stand. Over the course of the year, the people of Parks and Rec were dealt numerous “lemons.” Significant budget cuts, violent acts targeted at staff, and a lingering pandemic affected the work of the department. In a testament to people power, staff remained creative and forward-looking throughout the year. Partnerships flourished in 2022 after the last two years of pandemic shutdowns and operational changes. Community leaders like Jane Mio led the creation of the Benchlands Environmental Stewardship Team (BEST), which engaged unsheltered people living in San Lorenzo Park to serve as volunteers who worked each week to ensure the preservation of the riparian corridor along the river even while 250 people camped in the area. Despite budget reductions and a lean financial environment across the City, the Parks and Rec set a record as far as successful grants received to continue to invest in key parks projects, sustainability, and recreational opportunities. Considering community needs, which changed throughout the course of the pandemic, the people of Parks and Recreation found new opportunities to support families and Santa Cruz City Schools through after-school enrichment. The team leveraged the Children’s Fund to meet a critical community need by providing essential after-school care and programming. These examples and more are highlighted throughout this year’s Annual Report. With many lemons, the Parks and Recreation team and our partners built a lemonade stand in 2022. This is people power.

While there are many accomplishments and points of pride from 2022, woven between the lines of this Annual Report is a theme that is relevant and critical for Santa Cruz. It is the sustainability of the “lemonade stand.” Parks and Rec and our many partners are truly remarkable servant leaders. However, with diminishing budget, a changing world, and increased service demands, financial and human resources are essential. The people are strong and committed but are thirsty for the critical resources necessary to serve Santa Cruz through world-class recreation and parks. Looking forward, I am committed to keeping our people powered and welcome and encourage your support. We all need a glass of lemonade from time to time.



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## MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Amidst the challenges of the day-to-day—which have included budget reductions, threats to staff safety, natural disasters and an ongoing pandemic—the department returned time and again to the “why” of the work. Together, the vision, mission, and values provide direction for everything that happens in the department. These statements keep the team focused on where the department is going and what it is trying to achieve. The core values define how staff are expected to conduct themselves in their actions to get the job done.

### Mission

To provide quality public spaces and experiences that build a healthy community, foster equity, and better the environment.

### Vision

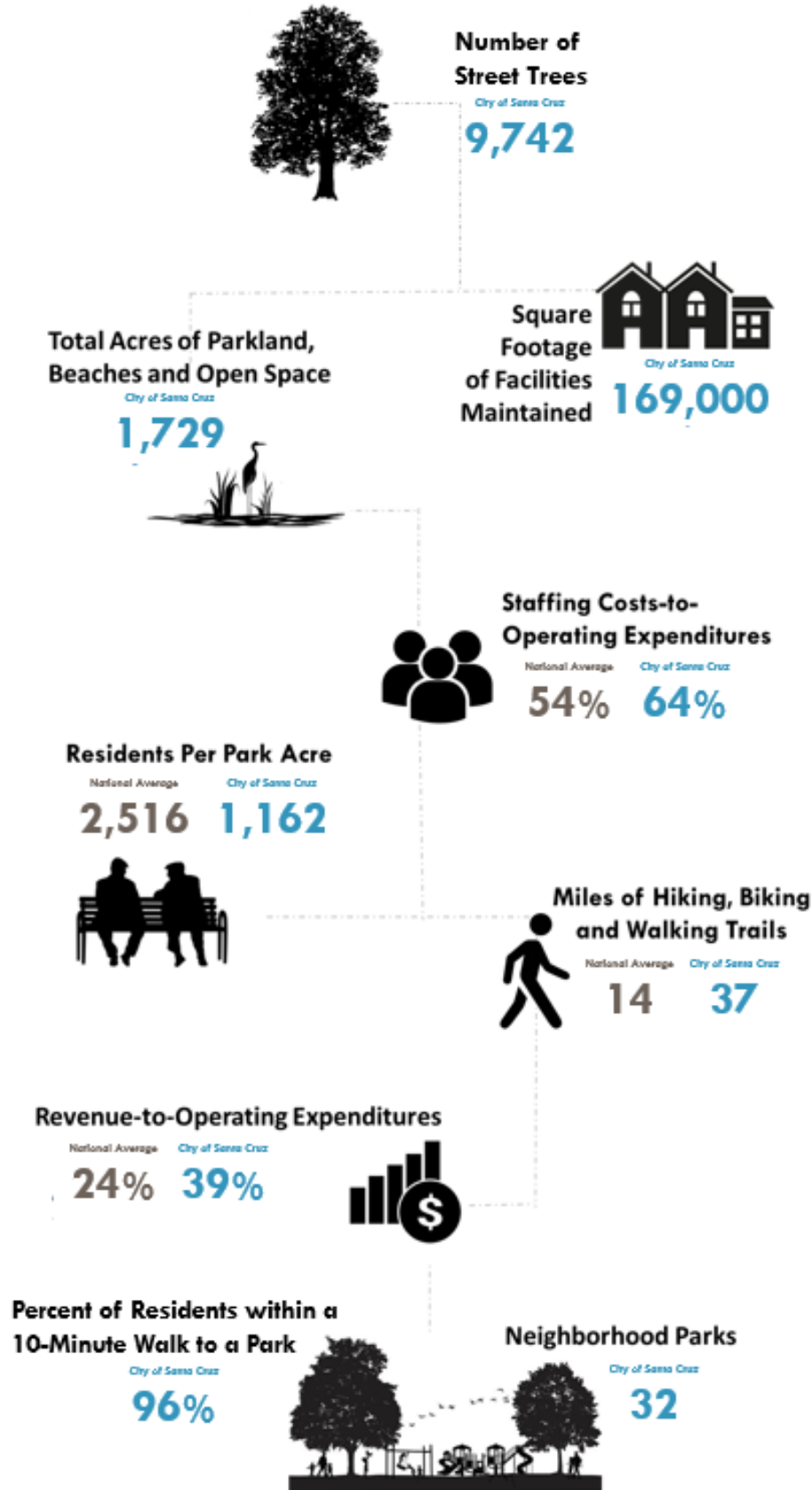
We envision a thriving Parks & Recreation system that creates recreational and cultural opportunities, improves quality of life, and strengthens the health of the local environment and economy for all.

### Values: Communication, Openness, Service and Collaboration

The parks and recreation department is essential to the community. To that end, we commit to:

- transparent and honest communication as the foundation of great relationships.
- a spirit of equity, openness and innovation, welcoming differences and diversity.
- service to the community in a manner that is sustainable, safe, responsive and accessible to all.
- collaboration to achieve results that reflect our department vision, leveraging the strengths of the community.

BY THE NUMBERS



National Averages are from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for jurisdiction populations between 50,000 and 99,999; City of Santa Cruz Statistics based on FY2022 numbers.

## DOLLARS & CENTS: DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### Expenditures

The FY2022 Parks and Recreation adopted budget included over \$617,000 in structural reductions to address significant pandemic impacts to city and department General Fund revenues. These reductions included the elimination of three vacant positions – a 1.0 FTE Construction Specialist position, a 0.50 Facility Attendant and an additional 0.25 FTE Box Office Representative. Further reorganization within the Recreation Division resulted in the net addition of 0.50 Recreation Assistants. With reductions, the budget was approximately \$16.4 million (\$16,413,740) with personnel costs accounting for 64 percent of the total.

**Challenges.** Absorbing additional structural budget reductions on top of past year reductions required the diligence, expertise and creativity of a seasoned and professional team. Most reductions made in the FY2022 budget meant operating “on the margin” with little room for error.

**Strategies.** The adopted budget required staff to operate on the margin. To be successful with this, supervisors focused on rehiring for budgeted vacant positions. Also central to re-staffing was the return of temporary workers, who provide critical support to department programs and services. While hiring for certain positions remained challenging, temporary staff hours increased from around 5,000 hours in FY2021 to over 35,000 hours in FY2022. Further, staff worked together to find savings across department divisions to help address unexpected budget emergencies and project opportunities.

### Revenues

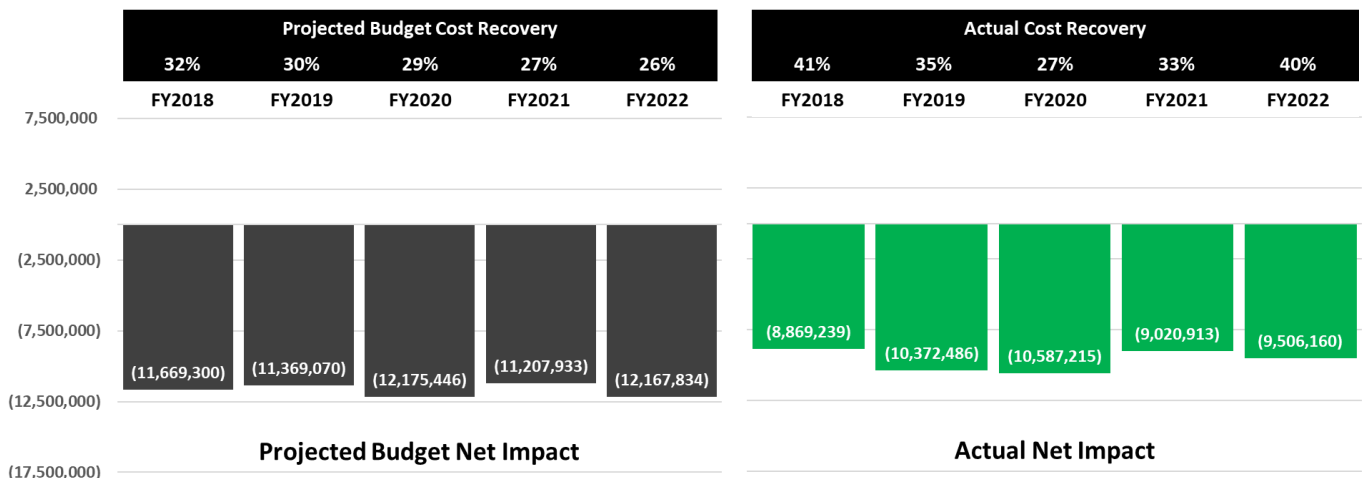
The Parks and Recreation department is funded primarily through general fund revenue sources, such as property taxes, sales and use tax, transient occupancy tax (TOT). In a typical year, the department generates enough revenue via program fees, permits, and other charges to offset about one-third of its expenditure budget. In FY2022, department activities were conservatively projected to bring in nearly \$4.2 million (\$4,180,996) in revenues.

**Challenges.** The department continued to closely follow county and state public health guidance to make public safety a continued priority as conditions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve.

**Strategies.** The department continued implementation of the Golf Course Operations Plan. Further, fee increases were assessed across a number of areas, including beach rentals. Adjustments and corrections were made to ensure the department remained on track to continue its efforts to align program area cost recovery with national best practice benchmarks.

### Cost Recovery

A key department metric is the revenue-to-operating expenditure ratio. In FY2022, the budgeted ratio was a conservative 26 percent. With the department utilizing nearly its entire adopted expenditure budget (97 percent), staff and partners delivered a year of revenues that were higher than at any point since FY2015. Outstanding efforts by staff kept picnic rental areas attractive, events humming, after school care programs curated and launched—all of which helped drive one of the department’s healthiest revenue years in sometime. In the end, cost recovery was 14 points higher than expected, well above the national average. The resulting net impact of the department on the General Fund was \$9.5 million (\$9,506,160).



## FY2022 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### GOAL: Deliver high quality parks for community health & well-being

#### Secured wharf maintenance permits allowing for critical structural repairs.

The Department was successful in securing permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Coastal Commission for regular maintenance of the Santa Cruz Wharf. The Wharf is the longest timber pier on the coast of the United States and has been continuously maintained by the City of Santa Cruz since 1914. The five-year Regional General Permit from the Army Corps and Coastal Development Permit from the Coastal Commission allow for replacement of up to 200 of the Wharf's 4,450 piles, repairs to the Wharf structure, decking, utilities, boat landings, perimeter fence, and existing buildings. The permits put in place conditions to protect water quality, marine mammals, endangered species such as sea turtles, and seabirds. The City is scheduled to check in with the Coastal Commission after one year of implementation and discuss whether any modifications to the permit issued by that agency are necessary.



#### Community engagement and investment brings new life to Central Park and Playground.

The Central Park project broke ground in 2019 and was shaped by community outreach and our engaged public. Along with collaboration with Economic Development, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council, the City was awarded an \$86,000 Community Development Block Grant to make this project possible.

The remodeled Central Park and Playground was reopened in September 2021. This beloved neighborhood park was renovated to meet today's safety and accessibility standards and includes improvements to landscaping, site furnishings, drainage, and irrigation systems. Wood fiber was installed and the new play area features structures for children of all ages and includes swings, a merry-go-round, a climbing rock and active tower structure. Updating this neighborhood gem is an investment in our children and families. Thanks to the support of so many neighbors and community partners, this community now has a wonderful new space to enjoy!

#### Improved safety along the West Cliff pathway, Santa Cruz' most beloved recreational path.

Twenty-five crew members from Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Greenways & Open Space and the Wharf joined together to remove 22,660 pounds of ice plant from the pathways and streetside curb line of West Cliff, from Chico Ave to Almar Ave. The South African "highway ice plant" was introduced to California to stabilize railway cuttings and road banks. Left unchecked, it can quickly grow into the roadway and pathway, creating tripping hazards and safety concerns. Work was completed with the use of two tractors, two dump trucks, 10 reciprocators, 2 weed whips and many, many shovels.



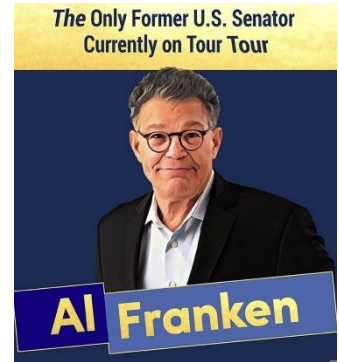
## GOAL: Provide essential services, facilities and programs for community health & well being

### Facilities returned to event and recreation programming as COVID testing concluded.

Parks and Recreation was proud to serve the community by offering facilities in easily accessible locations during the peak of the pandemic, providing over 10,000 tests at the Civic Auditorium through December 2021 and over 5,000 tests at the Depot Freight Building from December 2021 to March 2022. Beginning April 4th, department programs returned to both the Civic Auditorium and Depot Freight Building.



The Civic roared back into action with a suite of well attended events featuring Comedian/Politician/Podcaster Al Franken, author David Sedaris, Bob Dylan, the Santa Cruz Symphony, Whose Live Anyway and the first mixed martial arts contest produced by Bay Area Combat. Meanwhile, Depot Freight Building opened its doors once again to senior ping pong, summer classes, special events and private reservations.



### Partnered with City Schools to provide families with essential After School Care.

The department, in close collaboration with City Schools, supported working parents by coordinating after school enrichment classes through its independent contractor class program. Working with instructors to design classes at each of the four elementary school sites—Bay View, Gault, Westlake, and DeLaveaga—students and parents had a range of activities from which to select, such as World Cup Soccer, Basketball Skills, Parkour/Freerunning, Skatedogs Skateboarding, All About Theatre Improv and Story Acting, Ballet, Polynesian Dance, Music in Motion, Stem Exploration, and Korean classes.

### Launched first, post-pandemic full-schedule of summer programming.

Summer 2022 marked the return to a full schedule of programming, including two four-week sessions of Junior Guards and Beach Camp, four sessions of summer camps plus extended care at Harvey West Park and over 50 specialty classes for youth and teens. Super Saturday registration was a total success with 2,107 participants enrolling in programs, a 35 percent increase in enrollment from 2019!

With a full line-up of programs, staff worked with Santa Cruz City School Site Coordinators to increase scholarship outreach to families. In total, FOPAR awarded over \$20,000 in scholarships to income-eligible families and families experiencing hardships. Junior Guard Boosters awarded an additional \$1,300 to non-city junior guard residents and the JR Scott family awarded \$2,000 in junior guard scholarships. Many thanks to FOPAR, the JR Scott family, Junior Guard Boosters, Omega Nu and the City's Children's Fund for providing scholarships that enable youth participation in these essential programs.



*"I get to see my friends and play in the ocean. I like the competitions. I enjoy surfing and paddling out. I want to learn how to save my friends in the ocean if they get hurt. I am excited to be in a group this summer."*

*"The water safety I learn is really fun and I can take it with me everywhere I go. I have made new friends on the beach in Santa Cruz Junior Lifeguard Program. It makes me feel a part of one big, loving, caring beach family."*





## GOAL: Steward our natural resources

### Over 50 tons of trash and debris removed at Main Beach.

A confluence of several factors made it especially challenging to keep Main Beach clean during FY2022. Even before the official reopening of California, large numbers of people were visiting Main Beach, even on days that would normally be quiet. Along with these visitors, an increased number of food and merchandise vendors established a presence on Beach St. and Main Beach itself. The vendors directly deposited materials in the public dumpsters and many of the items sold end up as trash. Recruiting temporary positions necessary to keep the beach clean remained difficult.



Considering these challenges, the entire Wharf & Beaches crew did a remarkable job. They added trash cans, continued last year's practice of placing covered dumpsters on the beach to handle the large volume of trash, added a regular evening beach cleanup shift, installed new beach signage, initiated a public communications campaign, and completed "all-hands" cleanups as needed. These efforts were further supported by Save Our Shores, the Sunrise Rotary Club, and the City Council Beach Cleanup Competition.



### Continued experimental outplanting of greenhouse-grown tarplant seedlings at Arana Gulch.

Thanks to a \$22,050 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant to conduct research that will further the recovery of the endangered Santa Cruz tarplant at Arana Gulch, staff, grant partners, and UC Santa Cruz student volunteers continued the experimental outplanting of greenhouse-grown tarplant seedlings at Arana Gulch. Building off of the knowledge gained from last year's plantings, several outplanting methods were compared. More than 1,000 seedlings were planted on site to accompany the original population and the thousands of seedlings produced from last year's

plantings. With the assistance of the City's Communications team, the Department was able to get positive media attention for the project, including spots on local TV and radio.

### Completed grant-funded encampment cleanups at Sycamore Grove and Moore Creek open spaces.

With support from the CalRecycle's Farm and Ranch Solid Waste Cleanup and Abatement program, the department's Open Space Team was able to remove several tons of trash and debris associated with abandoned homeless encampments in Moore Creek and Sycamore Grove. The work required many hours of manual labor to remove the debris, in some cases from deep canyons and at the bottom of steep slopes. To reduce the need for future cleanup work, the grant also funded installation of a fence across an illegal access point at the bottom of the Moore Creek open space opposite Grandview St. In Sycamore Grove, the grant funded the construction of a nature loop trail (pictured below) as called for in the Pogonip Master Plan. The team hopes the new trail will help activate the space and discourage negative behaviors in this sensitive riparian habitat.



## SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY IMPACT POWERED BY PARTNERSHIP

The Parks and Recreation Department plays a central role in the delivery of vital services, programming and amenities that are enjoyed by the community every day, often at little or no direct cost. Well-funded park and recreation services advance community health and well-being, better prepare communities for the impacts of a changing climate and help ensure equitable access to the wide-ranging benefits of recreation. Community partnerships help expand programming and services in many ways. They help implement, improve and maintain amenities, programs and services.. Partners also help fill critical gaps in expertise, skills and resources that are needed to achieve department programmatic and service goals.

Today's realities require most public parks and recreation departments to seek productive and meaningful partnerships with community organizations and individuals to deliver quality and seamless services to their residents. The department aims to develop relationships that are mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and expand the positive impact of the City's mission. Effective partnerships and meaningful volunteerism are key strategic areas for the City to meet the community's needs in the years to come.

### Partnership Focal Areas



### Types of Partnership

Partnerships with individuals, community organizations, local businesses and other agencies is a powerful way to match enthusiasms and resources to provide greater public benefit. The department has several different types of partnership:

**Contractual Operating/Management Partners.** Entities and organizations that support the efforts of the City to maintain facilities and assets, promote amenities and park usage, support site needs, provide programs and events, and/or maintain the integrity of natural/cultural resources via written bilateral agreements.

**Volunteer and Non-Profit Service Partners.** Nonprofit organizations and/or friends' groups that support the agency's efforts through volunteer labor, money and other resources.

**Co-Branding Partners.** Private, for-profit organizations that gain brand association and notoriety as a supporter of the City in exchange for sponsorship or co-branded programs, events, marketing, and promotional campaigns, and/or advertising opportunities.

**Resource Development Partners.** A private, nonprofit organization with the primary purpose to leverage private sector resources, grants, other public funding opportunities, and resources from individuals and groups within the community to support the goals and objectives of the agency on mutually agreed strategic initiatives.



## JANE MIO

**San Lorenzo River Stewardship.** Since 2016, Jane has led long-term stewardship efforts along the estuarine reach of the San Lorenzo River. Her habitat restoration efforts leveraged many other organizations and in the process connected hundreds of people with the river, the Riverwalk, and ecological restoration. Among the groups Jane has invited to work alongside her are the Valley Women’s Club, Americorps, the California Conservation Corps, school groups, Girl Scouts, the Museum of Natural History, and the Downtown Streets Team.

**Benchlands Estuary Stewardship Team.** Homelessness is a significant problem in Santa Cruz and its impacts are acute along the River. Given her experience partnering with the Downtown Streets Team, City staff asked Jane if she would create and lead a program to engage camp residents in caring for that area. In response, Jane created the Benchlands Environmental Stewardship Team, or BEST. The group cleaned up litter, cared for the habitat, and educated camp residents about the area’s value as a natural resource and how to avoid causing harm through camping, disposal, latrines, or vandalism.

**Parks and Recreation Commission.** Beyond her river stewardship work, Jane has also volunteered to serve on the City’s Parks & Recreation Commission since 2018. She was elected by her fellow Commissioners to the position of Vice Chair in 2020 and Chair in 2021.

In the Spring of 2022, Jane was honored for her service by the Santa Cruz City Council and received the “Champion of the Community” award from the California Recreation and Park Society.



Partners in Planting: Urban Forester, Leslie Keedy, & Jane



Jane’s inspiring spirit on full display



Jane with Kirby School volunteers



## MIKE & HELEN WALLER

**Downtown Senior Center.** In 2016, Helen Waller began volunteering at the London Nelson Community Center as a weekly teacher of Beginner and Intermediate Line Dance for the Downtown Senior Center. Helen has since been teaching line dance classes three times a week, with an explosive growth in participation. With a desire to provide continued social engagement through the pandemic, Helen adapted her dance classes to fit the Zoom format, allowing her to reach participants across Santa Cruz County and as far away as Alaska and Minnesota. To date, Helen has clocked over 2,300 volunteer hours, taught over 900 classes, and has had over 4,000 attendees just in her online Zoom classes from March 23, 2020-March 23, 2022.

**London Nelson Community Center and Laurel Park.** Mike Waller, Helen’s partner in life and on the dancefloor for nearly 50 years, has had an equally tremendous impact at the London Nelson Community Center. In 2019, Mike officially adopted Laurel Park, which lies adjacent to the Center. Bringing 40 years of landscaping experience to the park, Mike has used his skills and expertise to activate underutilized areas of Laurel Park. Mike has volunteered over 1,600 hours since he adopted the park, which is about an acre in size, and the perimeter of the London Nelson Community Center, about 25,000 square feet!

In May 2022, Mike and Helen received the “Be the Difference: Power Couple” award from the Santa Cruz Volunteer Center.



*Before Mike's adoption*



*Mike at work*



*The result of Mike's effort and dedication*



## SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS TRAIL STEWARDSHIP (SCMTS)

Founded in 1997 as "Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz", SCMTS has grown from a special interest advocacy group into a professional trail stewardship organization with deep trails expertise, a full roster of field and office staff, extensive community and volunteer engagement, and strong relationships with local land managers.

**Project Fundraising and Implementation.** SCMTS has the professional expertise to implement projects, but their partnership with the city has yielded tremendous value thanks to their ability to also generate the necessary funding to address city project shortfalls and budget gaps. In major projects undertaken together, such as the Emma McCrary trail in Pogonip, the Harvey West Pumptrack and the Westside Pump Track, SCMTS brought much needed in-kind project staffing resources and donated funding to ensure a successful scope and implementation.

**Trail Maintenance and Construction.** The professional trail building expertise at SCMTS helps our Open Space and Greenways crew address capacity constraints. Over the years, their staff have contracted with the city to carry out trail maintenance and construction in Arana Gulch, Pogonip and the DeLaveaga open spaces.

**Summer Youth Trail Program.** The department partners with SCMTS to run the trail program for youth each summer. This program brings together a crew of high school students to rebuild, restore, and renovate hiking and mountain biking trails in city parks and open spaces. The students get paid summer jobs, outdoor work experience and an increased awareness of environmental issues. SCMTS Crew Leaders manage, train and oversee the work of the crew. Crew members are paid city employees and work 6 hours/day 5 days a week for 8 weeks. Besides doing good work in city open spaces, the Summer Youth Trails Program teaches job skills and introduces students to career opportunities working in parks and natural resources.



*Youth trail crew members hard at work.*



*Young riders line up to test the Westside Pump Track at its grand opening!*



*Trail crew members hard at work constructing the Emma McCrary trail in Pogonip Open Space. This was the city's first collaboration with the group in 2012.*



## FRIENDS OF PARKS & RECREATION: JUNETEENTH COMMITTEE

The London Nelson Community Center Juneteenth celebration is a community cultural event, acknowledging the abolition of slavery in the United States. 2022 marked the 30th year of the event in Santa Cruz and the first year the event was recognized as a federal holiday. The Juneteenth Committee, chaired by Ana Elizabeth Marden (pictured above, center), serves as an organizing body for this highly anticipated event where people come to see old friends and make new ones while enjoying delicious soul food, listening to good music, and learning about London Nelson, Black Santa Cruz and the Emancipation Proclamation.

In designing the event program, the Committee aims to reflect the arts experience of the Black African Diaspora. Drawing participation from the Santa Cruz community regardless of gender, age, and skill level, the Committee showcases talent from our local community first. By leveraging local talent and excellence, a stunning program is created highlighting the cultural roots of our local community.

The Committee brings in a wide array of donations and sponsorships to support the event, measuring success by the variety of organizations and event participants. Vendor booths focus on topics such as health, wealth, food, housing, arts and education. The event provides space for the local Black American community along with its allies and those who support social justice for Black people. The Committee coming together in joy for Juneteenth sends a strong message that Black history, culture and voice are a vibrant piece of the Santa Cruz community.



Recreation Coordinator, Jack Sprow, prepares to call the sack race winner.



30th Year Program Poster



Juneteenth performance brings the crowd to its feet!



## FRIENDS OF PARKS & RECREATION: JUNIOR GUARD BOOSTERS

Under the umbrella of the Santa Cruz Friends of Parks and Recreation group, the Junior Guard (JG) Boosters are without a doubt one of the longest volunteer and fundraising groups since the inception of the Friends group over forty years ago. Today, the JG Boosters are 25 members strong with a core team of active contributors that are aimed at preserving and expanding the Santa Cruz Junior Lifeguard tradition through volunteer and financial support.

**Fundraising.** Marketing a suite of creative merchandise, the JG Boosters bring in around \$35,000 in sales annually through a variety of beach sales and program banquets. In May 2022, they held their first “Summer Jam” event to get the Junior Guard community pumped up for the coming summer season. Given the enormous success of the event, which was held at Berdels on the westside, the group is planning to make it an annual summer kick-off affair for the program and its supporters.

**Scholarships.** Each year, the JG Boosters accept scholarship applications from non-city residents in an attempt to expand access to the program to more area children.

**Local, Regional and National Support.** Allowing Junior Guard program participants to test their skills in state and national competition means added costs to support travel, meal and accommodation costs for both participants and instructors. The JG Boosters provide funding that allows local youth to experience this aspect of the program. Further, the Booster group is looking to expand potential for international junior guard exchange with Santa Cruz Sister City Biarritz, France.



Santa Cruz “JG” participants awaiting their turn to compete on Main Beach



Summer Jam promotional poster



Summer Jam event in full swing



## JEB BISHOP & GROUNDSWELL COASTAL ECOLOGY

**Pilkington Creek Restoration.** Not long ago the banks of Pilkington Creek were blanketed with an almost impenetrable thicket of nonnative mattress vine, himalayan blackberry, and english ivy , which suffocated the creek ecosystem. In 2010, volunteers worked tirelessly to eliminate the mattress vine and other invasive species, with support of the City and the Museum.

Lead by Jeb Bishop in partnership with Groundswell Coastal Ecology as part of the department’s Adopt-A-Park program, the Pilkington Creek Riparian Enhancement Project is restoring native habitat to riparian woodland and coastal prairie along a seasonal coastal stream that flows to Seabright Beach. In the winter the stream forms a bar built estuary that flows to the ocean during periods of high rainfall. Part of Tyrrell Park, the site borders Brook Ave, just east of the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History.

Passionate volunteers have since replaced the invasives with a glorious diversity of native plants. These plants provide wildlife habitat and produce nectar, berries, and seeds that support many species of animals. Over 40 species of native birds have been documented alongside rich populations of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. As well as supporting resident bird species, the site has become an important “stopover” for migrating birds on their way to and from their southern overwintering grounds.



*Student stewards plant among Douglas iris*



*Nancy tends the wilds of Pilkington*



*Sunday morning planting in the spring*



# THANK YOU.

The work of all department partners is critical and appreciated. This fiscal year's achievements would not have been possible without their support. There is much for this community to collectively be proud of. Partner resources, time and creativity will continue to be an essential ingredient to progress toward a thriving Parks & Recreation system that creates recreational and cultural opportunities, improves quality of life, and strengthens the health of the local environment and economy for all.

Santa Cruz Archers

Arts Council of Santa Cruz County

Black Health Matters

Black Surf Club

Blended Bridge

Boys & Girls Club

Cabrillo Festival

City of Scotts Valley Senior Center

Coastal Watershed Council

Community Bridges

Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

County Office of Education

Cowell Working Group

Cruzio

DeLa Upper Park, Inc.

DeLaveaga Disc Golf Club

Downtown Association

Friends of Parks & Recreation

**Friends of Parks & Recreation: Juneteenth Cultural Committee**

**Friends of Parks & Recreation: Junior Guard Boosters**

Friends of the Santa Cruz Library

Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz

Grant Park Neighbors

Grey Bears

GSL Inc,

Homeless Garden Project

Hospice of Santa Cruz County

**Jane Mio & the Benchlands Estuary Stewardship Team**

Japanese Cultural Fair Committee

**Jeb Bishop & Groundswell Coastal Ecology**

Kaiser Permanente

Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Santa Cruz Lawn Bowls Club

Little League

Market St. Senior Center

Matter of Balance

Mercy Housing

**Mike & Helen Waller**

Monterey Bay Salmon and Trout Project

Museum of Art & History

NAACP

Nueva Vista

Our Lady Star of the Sea

Pony/Colt League

Reggie Stephens Foundation

San Lorenzo Park Neighbors

Santa Cruz City Schools

Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission

Santa Cruz County Youth Soccer Club

Santa Cruz Hostel

**Santa Cruz Mountains Trail Stewardship**

Santa Cruz Museum Association

Santa Cruz Pickleball Club

Santa Cruz Pop Warner

Santa Cruz Public Libraries

Santa Cruz Shakespeare

Santa Cruz Symphony

Santa Cruz Woodies

Save Our Shores

Save the Waves

Seaside Company

Senior Network Service

Seniors Council

State of California National Guard

Sure Thing Productions

Surfing Museum Preservation Society

Sylvia J Manson

University Business Park

University of California Santa Cruz

Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz

*\*Featured in this report.*

## **GOAL: Responsibly manage valued department resources both in terms of people and budget**

### **Secured over \$1.2M in grants to support pandemic recovery, park and facility improvements, as well as open space restoration.**

Across the department, staff did an outstanding job securing grant support for a variety of critical department needs. The Civic Auditorium team wrote a successful proposal for \$295,623 to the Small Business Administration Shuttered Venue Operator grant program. Funds were used to offset staffing costs while the facility was unable to generate event revenue. The department's Associate Planner was successful in securing a \$177,952 California State Parks Per Capita grant that will help support the renovation of Garfield Park, as well as a CalTrans Clean California grant for \$727,862 to renovate the Beach Street Public Restrooms at Main Beach. Finally, the department received a \$22,050 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant to continue the recovery of the endangered Santa Cruz tarplant in Arana Gulch.

### **Restored staffing levels to address vacancies creating by the FY21 hiring freeze.**

Throughout the 2021 Fiscal Year, the department operated at low staffing levels due to the City hiring freeze, early retirements, and resignations. During this time, staff from recreational areas that could not operate due to COVID were reassigned to the Parks Division to address increased community demand. In FY2022, staff returned to their regular duties, and Human Resources and the City Manager's Office worked closely with the department to recruit and fill many vacant positions (See "New Team Members & Position Changes on the next page). By year's end, the department had returned to a more typical vacancy rate of around four percent, down from nearly 20 percent at the height of the hiring freeze. Even so, the department finds it a continual challenge to fill temporary positions. Vacancies remain that inhibit the ability to provide the coverage needed and the service levels desired by the department and community.

### **Helped launch new Sidewalk Vending Ordinance and associated permit program.**

Thanks to a multi-department effort, the City's new sidewalk vending ordinance went into effect in May 2022. The new ordinance requires vendors to have a sidewalk vending permit (\$30 each year) to be able to vend in the City of Santa Cruz. Sidewalk vending is no longer allowed on Beach Street from April 1 – October 31 each year. Vendors that sell in city parks or on Pacific Avenue must have a Parks Vending Permit (\$50 each year) and a reservation for demarcated spaces along Pacific Avenue and in certain parks where vending is permissible.

The ordinance also prohibited sidewalk vending year-round at city beaches, open spaces, natural, and scenic areas (which include Arana Gulch, Pogonip, Moore Creek, the San Lorenzo Riverwalk), West Cliff Drive pedestrian pathway, Santa Cruz Wharf and the Beach Street Promenade Deck. Given the existing demands of the summer season, the Administrative team did a phenomenal job to inform the implementation plan, assist those interested in Park Vending permits and allow park vending spaces to be booked online and in-person.



## NEW TEAM MEMBERS AND POSITION CHANGES

Whether new additions to the Parks and Recreation Department or existing team members with a new role, the department was grateful to bring these dynamos aboard as strong contributors to our mission of providing quality public spaces and experiences that build a healthy community, foster equity, and better the environment!



**John Blevins**  
Park Maintenance Worker  
Open Spaces & Greenways



**Annalise Bryant**  
½ BMW, ½ Rec Coordinator  
Wharf & Beaches



**Manuel "Manny" Escobar**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Neighborhood Parks



**Paul Fortino**  
Field Crew Leader  
Community Parks



**Britt Hoberg**  
Wharf Supervisor  
Wharf & Beaches



**Francisco Ibarra**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Community Parks



**Wayne Kihei**  
Field Crew Leader  
Open Spaces & Greenways



**Kory Kvenlid**  
Wharf Construction Crew Lead  
Wharf & Beaches



**Rich Lewis**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Community Parks



**Jacob Loftis**  
Construction Worker  
Wharf & Beaches



**Kara Newman-Ferdolage**  
Recreation Supervisor  
Events & Classes



**Myasha Nicholas**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Neighborhood Parks



**Daniel Sanchez**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Community Parks



**Callum Stoddard**  
Parks Maintenance Worker  
Neighborhood Parks



**Stephen Sueyoshi**  
Light Equipment Mechanic  
Community Parks



**Nick Tanza**  
Recreation Coordinator  
Sports & Beaches

ADDITIONAL FY2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

**Deliver high quality parks for community health & well-being**

- Worked with Economic Development, Public Works and community members to develop Downtown Site Furnishing Standards
- Installed a new sewer lateral and interior plumbing upgrade at Grant Park restrooms, greatly improving their serviceability and function
- Resurfaced Laurel Park basketball courts
- Completed critical maintenance project work at Harvey West pool, which included installation of more efficient pool lights, improved chemical controllers for greater energy efficiency and reliability, and removal of outdated ozone equipment
- Repaired turf damage and fatigue resulting from an active summer season at Harvey West Park and prepared fields for winter rains to promote healthy turf for the next season
- Refreshed the George Washington Grove bocce courts
- Refinished the Civic hallway flooring to preserve floor life and reduce maintenance costs
- Revived existing downtown plantings with new plants, new mulch, and irrigation repairs; the large Memorial Plaza planting bed was entirely redesigned and replanted
- Prioritizing downtown beautification, updated tree wells on Pacific Avenue between Lincoln St. and Walnut Ave. with new plants, fresh wood chips and irrigation upgrades
- Completed renovations to Fredrick St. Dog Park: aerated soil to relieve compaction and improve drainage; filled areas worn bare with 200 pounds of grass seed; and top-dressed the park with sand to improve drainage and promote a level surface
- Addressed impacts to the wharf and beaches resulting from the January 15<sup>th</sup> tsunami that was generated by a volcanic eruption off the island of Tonga

**Provide essential services, facilities and programs for community health & well being**

- Utilized Laurel Park to create a magical, new outdoor youth theater venue; promoters who previously reserved the indoor auditorium enjoyed performances in the park all summer long
- Installed the updated sign and new London Nelson logo; members of the London Nelson Committee celebrated the new sign on the cover of the Winter-Spring activity guide
- Supported the December 2021 passage of the City of Santa Cruz Children’s Bill of Rights and will leverage relationships with city schools and service providers to ensure they are addressed effectively
- Collaborated with the County to facilitate use of Harvey West Pool during the temporary closure of Simpkins Swim Center for maintenance; from January thru May, the County offered programming at Harvey West, including lap swim and water exercise
- Leveraging Children’s Fund resources, expanded after school support for more than 200 vulnerable youth by providing outside games, art activities and additional homework support at Bay View and Gault Elementary after school programs
- Provided space for and continued maintenance of the Benchlands encampment
- Generated near record revenues (over \$80,000) from the 41<sup>st</sup> annual Santa Cruz Clam Chowder Cook-Off, a collaboration with the Beach Boardwalk

**Steward our natural resources**

- Completed feasibility study for remediation of environmental contaminants in the Pogonip Lower Meadow
- Cleared hundreds of feet of toe-ditch along the eastern portion of the river levee to prevent accumulated trash from washing into the National Marine Sanctuary
- Installed new energy efficient boilers at the Civic Auditorium and Harvey West Pool; expanded the use of electric parks equipment; and installed new efficient LED lighting at Harvey West Pool.
- Completed several upgrades to the DeLaveaga Golf Course irrigation pump station, replacing components with modern technology that will lead to improved energy and water efficiency.
- Completed or scheduled regular fire break mowing in the City’s open spaces, including areas of Moore Creek and the Pogonip most directly threatened by last summer’s fires.

**Responsibly manage valued department resources both in terms of people and budget**

- Continued to implement DeLaveaga Golf Course Operations Plan to close revenue gap.
- Completed a two-hour de-escalation training for all Parks Yard staff along with a division-wide Safety Panel following the parks yard arson
- Explored pay-to-play operations at the DeLaveaga Disc Golf Course
- Implemented a comprehensive website redesign to improve access to services and information
- Updated the department fee schedule and corrected beach rental fees in alignment with the department revenue policy



*Aerial view of the San Lorenzo Park Benchlands homeless encampment*

## SPOTLIGHT: PARKS AND HOMELESSNESS

Parks are essential infrastructure—just as important as bridges and highways. During the pandemic, they proved themselves as a place of respite, wellness, rejuvenation and regeneration. These spaces are meant to be safe and welcoming for everyone from youth to adults to seniors. Sometimes our parks also become places for community events, free speech expression and public forums. Supporting this vast array of activation is core to the department’s mission and values.

Homelessness is a challenge that can affect safety and access to both park and recreation spaces. In early 2022, the city developed the Homelessness Response Action Plan (HRAP) to provide “a roadmap for working to proactively address individual needs and community impacts related to homelessness,” according to City Manager Matt Huffaker. For the plan to be successful, it will require the support of the community, including the establishment of shelter sites, expansion of affordable housing opportunities, and the dedication of additional resources to sustain the new programs set forth in the plan. Objectives within the HRAP that aim to reduce the impacts of homelessness encampments on park and recreation spaces include: 1) Closing San Lorenzo Park Benchlands to camping and restoring impacted area; 2) Eliminating unsanctioned camps with the City, 3) Partnering with community groups to restore affected habitats throughout the City; and 4) Enforcing existing environmental protection regulations and addressing emergent issues through new regulations.

In the last year, city parks have increasingly intersected with issues of homelessness and safety. For example, the large Benchlands camp in San Lorenzo Park prevented other city residents from enjoying park space for personal use and community events. Staff working to clear vacated encampment zones were victims of physical assault and dog bites, as well as property destruction and vandalism. In the early morning hours of June 2, six park vehicles located at the Harvey West Parks Yard were set on fire. Buildings were vandalized with spray painted threats warning staff to “stop the sweeps” and to “leave homeless alone.” The department is committed to providing safe parks for the public and a safe working environment for staff in order to carry out the mission of the department. Resolving the complex issues associated with homelessness in parks will require time, understanding and collaboration. While this work continues, the safety of parks and people will be paramount.



*Burned vehicles from the Harvey West Parks Yard arson incident*

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The department maintains amenities that promote better physical and mental health, serve as meeting places that brings family, friends and fellow neighbors together, and contribute as an integral part of community environmental and disaster response. Park and recreation infrastructure is diverse and includes recreation centers, community centers, pools, sports fields and courts, bridges, skate bowls, urban forests, outdoor lighting, electrical and water utilities, and many other assets.

The following is a snapshot of projects that were initiated, continued making progress and concluded during FY2022.

NEW CIP Projects Activated with FY2022 Budget Appropriations			
Active CIP Project Name	Active CIP Project Description	Allocation	FY22 Status
Harvey West Park Infrastructure Improvements	ADA access, asphalt repaving and repair, site furnishing upgrades, and landscape renovation	\$210,000	In Process
Harvey West Ballfield Lighting	Replacement of existing lighting and wooden poles with LED lighting system. Cost includes installation. <i>*Remaining project cost is tied into the city-wide SiteLogIQ Energy Conservation project portfolio</i>	\$400,000	Pre-Planning
Garfield Park Renovation	Renovate basketball court, revitalize picnic area, and overhaul site furnishings	\$160,000	Pre-Planning
Ocean View Park Design	Pre-construction public engagement and redesign planning	\$60,000	On Hold
LNCC - Senior Studio Improvements	Concrete slab foundation and ADA accessibility ramp for the prefabricated "Senior Studio" as well as underground electricity hook-ups	\$50,000	Pre-Planning
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$880,000</b>	

EXISTING CIP Projects with New FY2022 Budget Appropriations			
Active CIP Project Name	Active CIP Project Description	Allocation	FY22 Status
Driving Range Improvements	Replace roofing on driving range building and replace driving range net, reconfigure/replace driving range net poles, replace perimeter cyclone fence, and improve stormwater management features	70,000	First Phase Complete
Facility Improvements	Replace roofing on the Lodge and Driving Range buildings and update exterior surfaces	60,000	In Process
Senior Center Rehab	Renovation of Market St. Senior Center	\$110,000	In Process
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$240,000</b>	

CIP Allocations Made In Prior Budget Years			
Active CIP Project Name	Active CIP Project Description	Allocation	FY22 Status
Grant St Park Plumbing Upgrade	Install grinder tank and new lateral in city sewer	\$35,000	COMPLETE
Laurel Park Court Resurfacing	Resurface Laurel Park Basketball court	\$12,000	COMPLETE
Trail Across 135 DuBois St.	Construct a trail across the easement at 135 DuBois St.	\$80,000	COMPLETE
Central Park Playground Upgrade	Install drainage, create sub base, install Pour N' Play surfacing, and new play equipment structures	\$84,406	COMPLETE
Beach St. Restrooms	Renovate the Beach Street Restrooms	\$325,000	In Process
San Lorenzo Park Redesign	San Lorenzo Park redesign master planning process	\$100,000	In Process
Sgt Derby Pickleball Courts	Construct pickleball courts at Sgt. Derby Park	\$55,000	In Process
Trails Study	Conduct an Open Space Trails Study	\$40,000	On Hold
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$731,406</b>	

**GRAND TOTAL     \$1,851,406**

## FY2023 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### Design Excellence

- Complete at least five Capital Investment Program (CIP) projects focused on infrastructure safety, court renovation at Neighborhood Parks, Open Space trail improvements and water conservation at DeLaveaga sports fields and golf course
- Prepare a new conceptual design for San Lorenzo Park
- Complete a system-wide assessment of aging facilities and deferred maintenance needs to better inform department CIP priorities and funding options

### Play, Community Health & Interaction

- Support county-wide implementation of the Park Rx Initiative, which engages local healthcare providers in prescribing simple, self-directed outdoor activities to improve community health outcomes by encouraging residents to spend more time in nature
- Contribute to the county-wide Master Plan on Ageing, aimed at supporting the implementation of state-wide strategies within Santa Cruz County
- Align programs to help deliver Children's Bill of Rights & Children's Fund outcomes

### Stewardship & Sustainability

- Update approved street tree list to promote a diverse and resilient tree canopy
- Collaborate with City Manager's Office to implement the Homeless Action Response Plan (HRAP) resource and land management components
- Develop and implement water-saving strategies for community and neighborhood parks and the DeLaveaga Golf Course

### Safety First

- Aim for zero encampments in city parks
- Implement frontline staff safety training program
- Create a roadmap for a park enforcement solution
- Update Emergency Preparedness plans for major facilities

### Connection & Accessibility

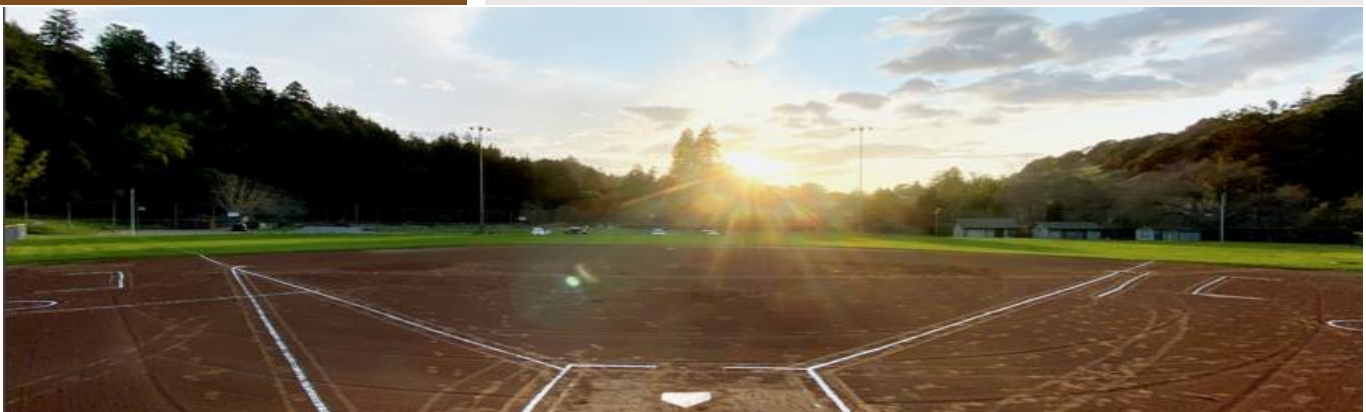
- Complete critical ADA work at key facilities (Golf Course, Civic and 222 Market St)

### Partnerships

- Renew Surf School & Concessionaire RFPs
- Develop strategic priorities with FOPAR
- Create/update seven partnership agreements, including park adopters and key operating partners

### Good Governance

- Secure three new grants to support open space stewardship, water conservation and facility safety, totaling at least \$500K
- Implement three fee updates and/or business plans to improve cost recovery around disc golf, civic event operations, youth sports and special event permitting
- Implement grant lifecycle management
- Strengthen and clarify partner agreement process and expectations
- Complete two priority business process improvements that improve customer service experience for permitting, reservations and/or registrations
- Develop basic training program for frontline staff and supervisor resource toolkits
- Document of public subsidies; continue to implement the department revenue policy



## Operating Budget (FY2022)

Division	Adopted Expenditure Budget	Adopted Revenue Budget	Actual Expenditures	Actual Revenues	FTE
Parks	\$10,838,808	\$2,918,514	\$10,502,476	\$3,761,671	57.00
Recreation	\$3,854,581	\$1,020,842	\$3,416,326	\$2,157,108	16.50
Administration	\$1,740,351	\$241,550	\$1,933,717	\$307,817	9.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,413,740</b>	<b>\$4,180,906</b>	<b>\$15,852,519</b>	<b>\$6,226,595</b>	<b>82.50</b>

### Public Assets

Community Facilities	8
Auditoriums	2
Community Centers	2
Museums	2
Senior Centers	2
<b>Parks</b>	<b>49</b>
Neighborhood Parks	32
Community/Regional Parks	6
Disc Golf Course	2
Ballfields (baseball, soccer, softball)	12
Basketball Courts	5.5
Beaches	4
Bike Park /Pump Tracks	5
Bocce Ball Courts	5
Community Gardens	5
Community Garden Plots	115
Dog Parks	8
Exercise Courses	6
Golf Courses	1
Horseshoe Pits	4
Lawn Bowling Greens	1
Open Spaces	7
Park Playgrounds	21
Pickleball Courts	10
Public Boat Landings	1
Reservable Picnic Areas	16
Reservable Sports Fields	11
Skate Parks	3
Swimming Pools	1
Table Tennis	3
Tennis Courts	6
Volleyball Courts (sand)	21
Wharf	1

### Staffing

Employee Type	Total
Full-Time Regular Staff FTE	76.00
Part-Time Regular Staff FTE	6.50
Temporary Staff - Hours	35,266

\* FTE in terms of positions

### Department Footprint

Total Acres of Parkland	1,729
Neighborhood Parkland	49
Community/Regional Parkland	332
Open Spaces	1,315
Beaches	33
<b>Total Sq. Ft. of Facilities Maintained</b>	<b>169,000</b>

### Trail Network

Total Mileage of Urban Trails	23.2
Paved	13.9
Non-Paved	9.3
<b>Estimated Mileage of Hiking Trails</b>	<b>13.9</b>

### Community Health

FY2022 Core Program Participation	
Adult Sports Leagues	1,643
Classes	2,953
Senior Classes	6,961
Community Events	76,007
Youth & Teens (Camps, Junior Guards, Children's Theater, Teen Center, Interns)	1,958
Adopt-A-Park Agreements	9

Fast facts are intended to provide public data updated once per year. Data is accurate as of June 30, 2022.

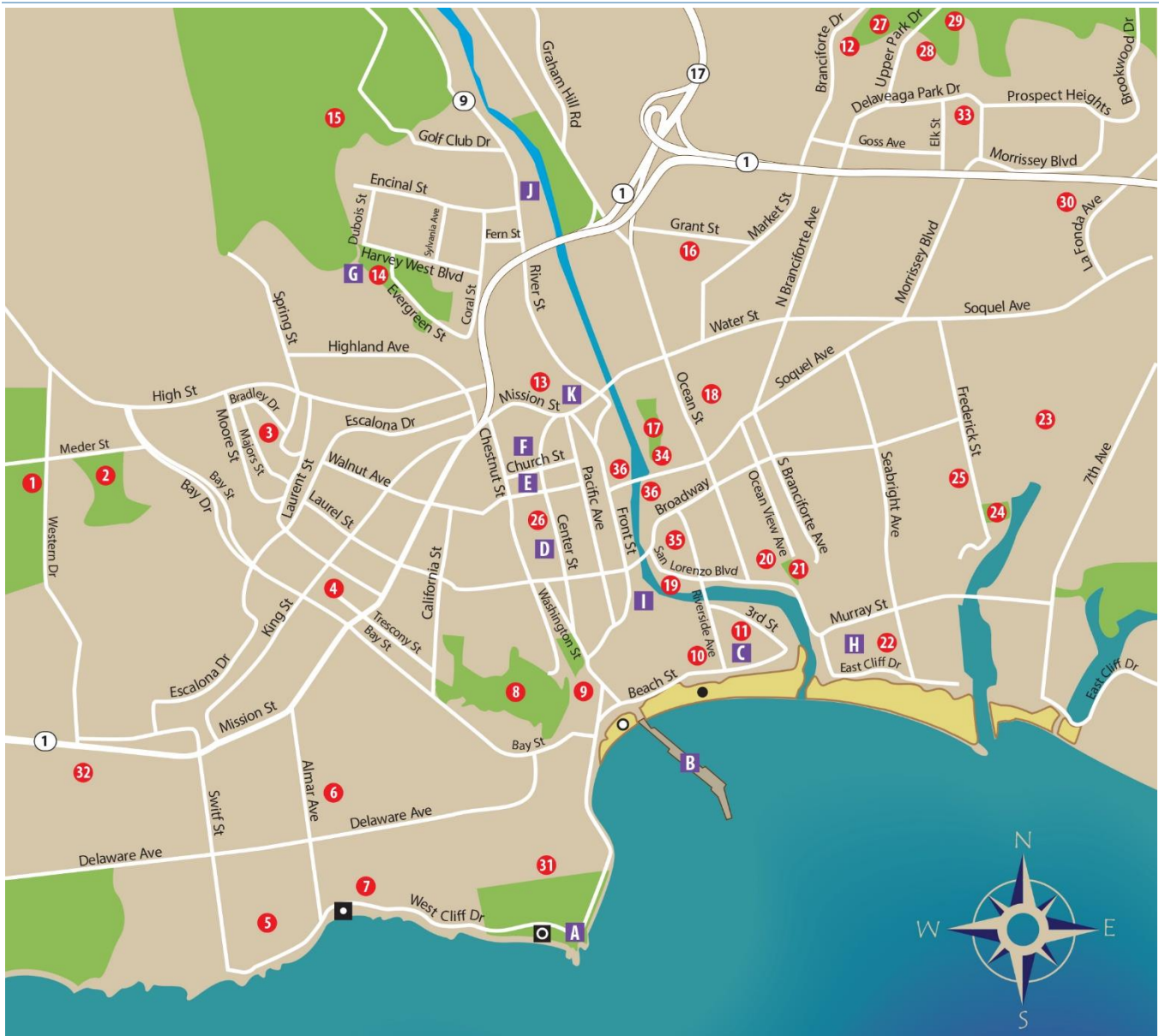
### City Workload Indicators

Indicator	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23 Goal
Participants in programs, classes & events	95,819*	30,106	99,797	136,288
Facility, field, court & picnic areas reservations	6,149*	5,755	10,851	9,101
Tons of general refuse/green waste removed	283/111	337/84	424/95	425/100
Annual labor hours (recreation facilities)/ 1,000 sq ft	N/A	99.54	99.54	99.54
Annual labor hours (parks and open space)/per acre	N/A	60.15	66.17	68.57
Indicator	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23 Goal
Percent tree canopy cover	N/A	38.9	38.9	38.9
Percent of residents within a 10 minute walk to a park	96	85*	96	96
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland	\$8,317	\$7,825	\$9,168	\$9,635
Percent costs recovered from non-tax revenues	27	33	40	32

\* Number impacted by COVID Shelter-In-Place Orders and subsequent COVID restrictions; italics indicate estimated number.



## Parks and Recreation



### Parks & Open Spaces

- 1 Moore Creek Open Space Preserve
- 2 University Terrace Park
- 3 Westlake Park
- 4 Trescony Park
- 5 Sgt. Derby Park
- 6 Garfield Park
- 7 Bethany Curve Park
- 8 Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge
- 9 Depot Park/Bicycle Trip Bike Park and Scott Kennedy Fields
- 10 Beach Flats Park
- 11 Poet's Park
- 12 Branciforte Dog Park
- 13 Mission Plaza
- 14 Harvey West Park
- 15 Pogonip Open Space
- 16 Grant Park
- 17 San Lorenzo Park
- 18 Central Park
- 19 Ken Wormhoudt Skate Park at Mike Fox Park
- 20 Jessie Street Marsh Open Space

- 21 Ocean View Park
- 22 Tyrrell Park
- 23 Arana Gulch Open Space
- 24 Frederick Street Park
- 25 Star of the Sea Park
- 26 Laurel Park
- 27 DeLaveaga Park
- 28 DeLaveaga Golf Course
- 29 DeLaveaga Disk Golf
- 30 John Franks Park
- 31 Lighthouse Avenue Park
- 32 Pump Track
- 33 Pacheco Dog Park
- 34 Mimi de Marta Dog Park
- 35 Riverside Gardens Park
- 36 Santa Cruz River Walk (San Lorenzo River Corridor)

### Beaches

- Main Beach
- Cowell Beach
- Its Beach
- Mitchell's Cove (Beach)

### Facilities

- A Surfing Museum
- B Santa Cruz Wharf
- C Beach Flats Community Center
- D London Nelson Community Center, Santa Cruz Teen Center and Downtown Seniors
- E Civic Auditorium
- F City Hall
- G Harvey West Clubhouse, Scout House and Pool
- H Museum of Natural History
- I Kaiser Permanente Arena
- J Tannery Arts Center
- K Town Clock



Parks  
and  
Recreation  
Make  
Life  
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For contact details and further information, please visit:  
[www.santacruzparksandrec.com](http://www.santacruzparksandrec.com)